The Saturday Review of Literature

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The Saturday Review of Literature

America in Guide Books*

FREDERICK GUTHEIM

WITH the publication this fall of "Oklahoma," the last of the forty-eight states will have been covered by the American Guide Series. Since its inception in 1935, this monumental project has been the principal occupation of the WPA Federal Writers Project, and although it has produced more than 700 city and local guidebooks and other writings that for the most part have been by-products of this enterprise, the guide to the forty-eight states are the principal goal, the main achievement.

Oklahoma is a new state, almost without history as American states go, and with few outstanding points of interest, and it would not ordinarily seem a very promising subject for a guidebook. Yet the importance of Oklahoma in the scheme of things American is already undeniable, and the interest of its guide is a token of the most outstanding characteristic of these guides to our states: their interest in things living as well as things dead, their description of the important as well as the picturesque, their concern with the common man as well as the personages and the landscape of industry and agriculture as well as scars on the environment made by the rich. In this vast seven-foot shelf panorama of our land a lasting monument to the America we know has been created, one to which future generations may well turn as we now turn to the Doomsday book or the yellowed pages of "Niles's Register."

Travel in America is now almost the only possible kind of travel, and the appearance of the Guide Series is providential to Americans who have just begun to get acquainted with their own continental richness and variety. Although we have been a nation of travellers, our literature of topographic description has been meagre and even its high points are almost unread. Timothy Dwight's four volume "Travels in New England and New York," of course, is really a guidebook and a grand one, too. Olmstead covered the Southern states in a fat and invaluable narrative. Clarence King wrote a description of the Sierras probably more lasting than some of the peaks of that young range. Audubon travelled more widely and loved the land better than almost any professional man of letters. But on the whole American writers have not been generous in describing their native land.

Perhaps it is well to recall that the beginning of the fight against the depression and the growing recognition of social evils in the fabric of our civilization coincided with the revival of interest in American things. It may not be too much to say that the American Guide Series (and the many other enticing series on the rivers, the seaports, the folk regions, and other aspects of America, which have followed it with scant thanks) all owe their inspiration to the early efforts of Brooks, Mencken, Bourne, Mumford, and the other critics who helped make us conscious and proud of our own strength, our own resources, our own achievements, and our own traditions. Like the writers, even American painters came back from Paris and began to paint the American scene before the devaluation of the dollar. This was an "American renaissance" in the most important sense of the term.

This renaissance changed our values. It changed the things our writers and our artists saw, and the way they looked at those things. You see this in the Guide Series not so much in the volumes on Vermont, California, or Florida where there is a well established and well commercialized line of tourist interest, or in Virginia and Maryland where there is a strong historical tradition which determines the organization of the guides; you see it in Wisconsin, Missouri, or Kentucky, the newer states, the indeterminate states, the big, square states between the mountain ranges whose history is fresh, whose people face the future, and where you are more likely to find "the typical American." This renaissance has made it possible for a series of American guide books to be written in which the decorous description of the architecture of a Southern plantation appears on the same page with the analysis of a rural electrification coöperative, where the dulcimer is orchestrated with the juke-box. Old Karl Baedeker must be turning pinwheels in his grave!

There is certainly little of Baedeker in the American Guide Series. They are the guides for the motor age. Nearly half of each guide is composed of tours, not the thorough take-you-by-the hand expeditions among the ruins of antiquity of the continental guides, or the pensive descriptions of the picturesque that characterized their predecessors, but the brisk, steady fifty mile an hour pace of the modern highway that gives it to you in short, meaty sentences and tenths of miles. Without the tours the guides would be mere collections of essays on various aspects of the states. The tours unite them to the great guidebooks of the past; they are the distinguishing characteristic.

I have travelled about fifteen thousand miles with the various Guides since they began to appear, and

From "Colorado: A Guide to the Highest State."

**American Guide Series. Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration.*

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read substantial sections of every one of them, mostly at night in hotels and on my lap in automobiles and in trains. I will certify that travel with and without the Guides is like dentistry before and after the x-ray. Like the invention of the microscope, the unseen worlds of history, or personality, of fact, are brought into focus for the traveller. Behind the dreary store fronts and monotonous elm-lined mid-nineteenth century streets of small towns everywhere we see a new life.

In their general pattern the Guides are very similar. We get the condensed general information, telling us what to wear on a dude ranch or how to buy a fishing license, and a calendar of events during the year. The first main section of each guide is devoted to a collection of essays describing various aspects of the state. Varying from state to state, according to need, these essays deal generally with the geography, history, economic and social structure, and culture of the state. In some cases *expertise* runs away with an essay, and again the sense of the whole is sacrificed in the multiplicity of parts, but by and large these essays form invaluable introductions to the state as a whole and their separate subjects. The writers on geology and archaeology have done a sensationally fine piece of work, and much remarkable and original writing has been done in the difficult pioneering aspects of local culture and folklore. The second main section of each guide is organized by cities and towns, each being described as a whole, with particular reference to the points of interest. Excellent maps strengthen this presentation. The third main section of each volume guides the traveller up and down and across the state along carefully chosen routes. These may vary from the eight lane main highways along the edge of the Pacific to the sandy banks of Cape Hatteras, where the tour is plainly marked "For the Adventurous." In a final section one finds a chronology, where the historical scraps that have been gleaned in these fascinating pages are gathered together in orderly fashion, a bibliography for the still curious reader, and an index, altogether the weakest and least successful part of all the Guides.

The logic of this organization is transparent. First, the organizers of the American Guide Series seem to have said, the reader will sit quietly at home and read the essays. He will try to understand the district through which he proposes to travel; or perhaps he is simply trying to come to terms with a state with no idea of travelling. Then he may plan his trip. He can decide which cities he would like to visit, and the most interesting routes over which he might travel in order to get from place to place. He can also determine the best season of year for his holiday, the price of admission to parks and historic houses, or where he can rent a canoe. Then he will set out on his travels, referring to the guide as he wishes to refresh his memory, but leaving it, for the most part in the glove pocket of his car, or on that convenient shelf streamlining has bequeathed us behind the rear seat. This is a guide for the motor age, not a flabby unreadable book on bible paper to stuff in one's pocket and con when one should be soaking up the real thing.

Perhaps this is not the way you want to use a Guidebook. To that the only reply is that it would be worth your while to try it once and watch the results. You will have some reflections on the difference between travel in a compact history-ridden European country, and travel in the windy continental stretches of a still young America, the difference between eight miles an hour on a bicycle and fifty miles an hour in a V-8. When I first began using the Guides I thought I ought to have a caddy; now I am convinced they are the Guides of Tomorrow.

The literary genre of guidebooks has more in common with art criticism than literary criticism. Essentially guides explain something you see, a physical fact rather than an idea or a state of mind. On the whole, guides are less concerned with people and personalities than with sticks and stones. Give a guide book writer a house where—to quote the Virginia guide—"that most famous overnight guest" slept, and he should be in his element. Give him a piece of local history and he is usually at a loss unless he can button it down to the very spot where it happened. This "X marks the spot" philosophy is the hall-mark of every guidebook. When I think of the number of times an event has been buttoned to a specific place for the first time it makes my editorial head reel. That certainly is one thing that the historian should be grateful for—although as the late Joseph Schafer's begrudging introduction to the Wisconsin Guide shows, the professional snobbery of the historian prevents its recognition now.

A bookworm on this shelf is in a quandary. When I began this article I collected orderly notes on utopias, screwy houses, eccentrics, inventions, odd crops, American ruins, crazy sculpture, names of towns, Indian massacres, White massacres, believe-it-or-nots, and several dozen other promising topics for a reviewer to write about. After a while I threw them all away. For while I am interested in Washington, Arkansas, where the bowie knives of legendary keenness were first

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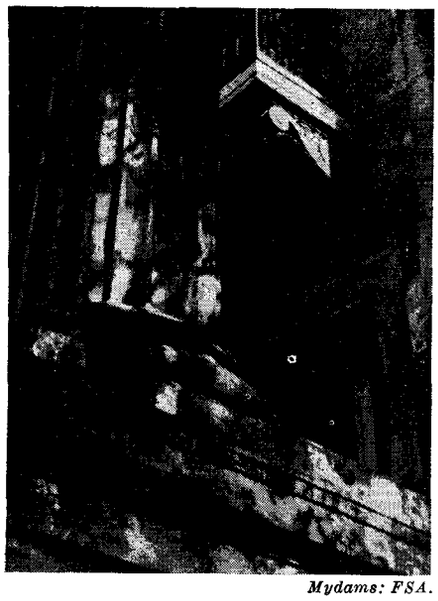
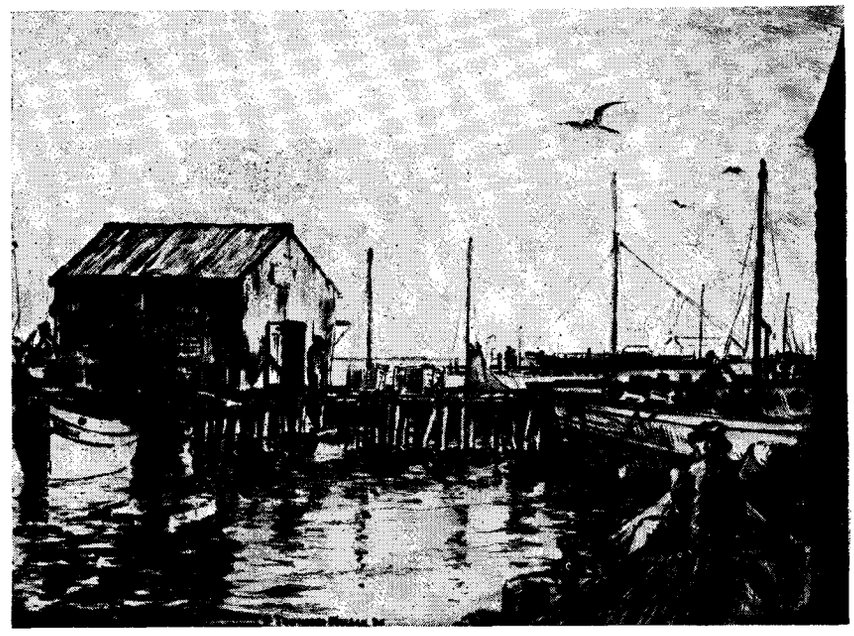
made, and that delectable and extraordinary chef, Louis de Puy, proprietor of the Hotel de Paris, in Georgetown, Colorado, this does not seem the essential subject matter of the guides. There is plenty of tourists' allspice in these books, but it is embedded in the marl of history, census statistics, geology, names, and dates, as it should be. The tall tales of Sergeant O'Keefe, the signal officer who described the volcanic eruption of Pike's Peak, or Will Rice, of St. Joe, Arkansas, in his weekly syndicated column, bring the books to life, but it's the hardness that makes the diamond, not the glitter. Dan Scullen, the Iowa locomotive engineer who used to cook his corn by stuffing two ears in the steam whistle of his engine, and S. P. Dinsmoor, the concrete artist who fashioned a concrete log cabin, scores of concrete figures, and a concrete coffin for himself near Lucas, Kansas, belong in the recognizable frame of ingenious frontiersmen. You will find a lot like them, sandwiched in between the merely curious, that underline the great traditions of the national character or provide the tiny facts that prick the tragic generalizations of our historians.

Reading the guides you get some strange and eerie feelings, and you find yourself with that same sense of contradiction you often feel in a laboratory or wherever else you run into masses of raw facts. This is not the well selected, carefully sculptured mosaic of formal history or geographical description: it is the profuse disorder of nature and life, the dadaist jumble of the daily newspaper. It gets in your blood and sends you crowing from oddity to anecdote, from curiosity to the dazzling illumination of a single fact. Aldous Huxley once wrote a fine justification for a single volume of the encyclopedia as the ideal literature to read while travelling: the Guides have some of that haphazard charm. You read, for example, about the town of Oberlin, Kansas, that awoke one morning in February, 1909, to find itself buried in Russian thistles, one house twenty feet deep before the wind shifted. Or you learn that the highest post office in the United States distinguishes Climax, Colorado (11,320 ft.). What patient prying dug this up?



Mydams: FSA.

Bellegrove, on the Mississippi, near White Castle.
—From "Louisiana State Guide"



Etching by F. Townsend Morgan, from "Key West Guide."

Thompson's Dock, Key West.

These books are guides to the real America, not the tourist America. The tourist America is there all right, the famous gardens of the Carolina low country, the fishing camps of northern Minnesota and Michigan, Natchez and the French Quarter of New Orleans, Monterey and the Torrey Pines, the plantations along the James—sometimes a little roughly handled, but there in all their real or tinselled glory. But here is the rest of America, the towns and counties we live in and pass through on the quickest, shortest trip. What of that America? It assumes a strange and unexpected aspect in the guides: take Elizabethtown, Kentucky. What does the writer see in this country town (pop. 2590)? There is a pat description of the town plan and its general appearance, with a note on economic and social life. The founding in 1780 is sketched and we learn that the town was named after the founder's wife. A picturesque anecdote from the early life of the community and a Civil War incident are followed by two meaty paragraphs of Lincolniana. In 1806, the town had twenty-two lawyers, five of whom attained national prominence. Two paragraphs devoted to the Helm family, closely connected with Lincoln's life, close the sketch. Details are given of the Lincoln room in the Court House, and the house where General Custer wrote "My Life on the Plains" is indicated with an apt characterization thrown in for good measure. All this in a little more than two pages. That gives some idea of the compressed writing of the better guides and the degree to which they can make convincing three-dimensional stage sets out of two-dimensional store fronts in a country town.

A similar quality characterizes many of the essays. That on Wisconsin architecture explains silos and round barns as well as the set pieces in the state's building chronicles. The essay on Literature in the Arkansas guide does not scorn to quote that classic of American rhetoric "Change the Name of Arkansas." Folksy as a colored post card in places, the whole picture generally comes through. There is an effort to tell the truth that a lot of books about places and people lack. If the fascinating Utah guide soft pedals the necessitous glee with which the Mormons gouged travellers scurrying to the California gold strikes, Arkansas can quote the disappointed settler who took one look at a corner of the state and remarked "Arkansas is not part of the world for which Jesus Christ died—I want none of it!" Where the Chamber of Commerce point of view rears its inky head it is often handled with a dry skepticism, as in the account of Barbara Fritchie in the Maryland guide. The Writers' Project may have been politically driven to the water, but it only gargled. Most of the sacred cows in the stable are phonies, or else they are being fed sawdust. This between-the-lines approach works both ways,

(*Continued on page* 15)

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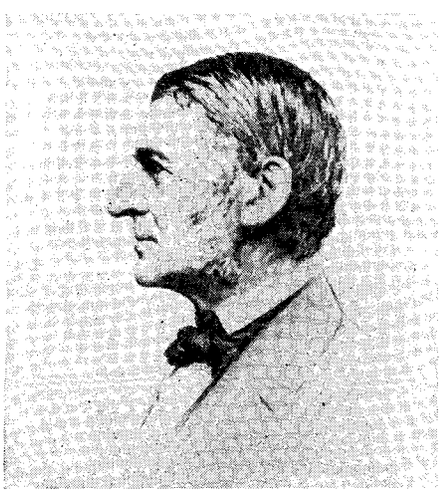
Emerson & Co.

AMERICAN RENAISSANCE. Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman. By F. O. Matthiessen. New York: Oxford University Press. 1941. 678 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by ROBERT E. SPILLER

THE appearance of another critical estimate of the literary great of our past century will be greeted with enthusiasm or alarm or weariness depending upon the mood of the reader. There is no shortage of such works. Separate biographies and criticisms of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman line our library shelves; and syntheses of the facts and theories which surround their works have been many, from Mumford's "The Golden Day" to Brooks's "The Flowering of New England." The reasons for another such study, especially for one of more than six hundred pages, must be convincing.

The chief reasons are two, a need and its answer, and together they are extremely convincing. In an era of crisis, a people naturally turns to its historians and critics and prophets for reassurance of its faith in its own destiny. Mr. Matthiessen combines some of the characteristics of all three types of leader. He knows and has meditated long and profoundly on the literary history of America and its antecedents in western European culture; he has developed his own technique of literary criticism under the best of contemporary masters, Brooks, Eliot, Lowes, and many others; and because he is ultimately concerned with values rather than with mere facts, the robe of the prophet falls upon his shoulders whether he will or not. The result is perhaps the most profound work of literary criticism on historical principles by any modern American with the possible exception of Lowes's "Road to Xanadu."

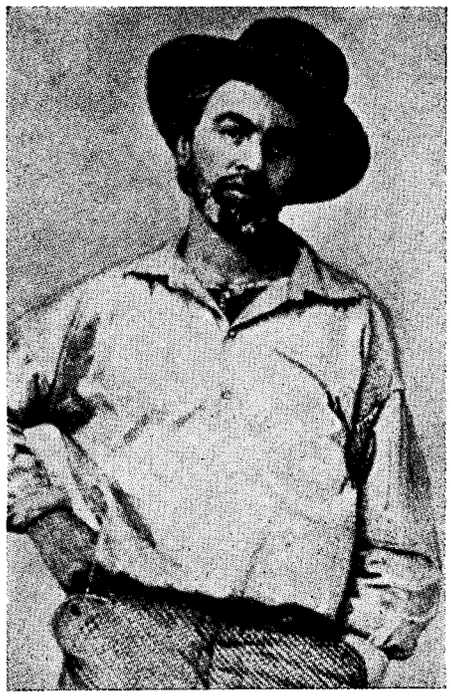


Ralph Waldo Emerson

The association of the titles of these two books here is not an accident. The training and equipment of the two authors is similar in kind and degree, the problems with which they deal both arise from Coleridge's organic theory of the imagination, and the methods of their criticisms are kindred. The subjects alone are markedly different. Both books are evidences of what happens when long hours of research of the traditional objective sort are fused and ignited by the critical imagination. It seems strange that Mr. Matthiessen, in acknowledging so frankly his indebtednesses, has not mentioned this work of his colleague.

"American Renaissance" is a book with a thesis supported by an overwhelming mass of selected and interpreted evidence. But because its author keeps his thesis malleable and carefully avoids dogmatism, it would not be fair to tie it down to a single statement. Brooks, Mumford, and others have pointed out that American culture in some mysterious way flowered during the short period 1850-55, mainly though not exclusively in New England. Mr. Matthiessen sets himself the task of analyzing the nature of that flowering by a close examination of the works of five major authors who during that period issued a part of their most profound and characteristic work. He establishes two chief poles of reference: Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection," the American edition of which appeared in 1829, and T. S. Eliot's "Selected Essays, 1917-1932," perhaps the most influential of contemporary literary criticisms. Looking forward from Coleridge, he traces the direct impact of the organic theory on Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, and its derivative effect in the development of a theory of tragedy by Hawthorne and Melville. Looking backward from Eliot, he sees his American Renaissance in the light of the metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century and its antecedents in Shakespeare and the Elizabethans. From these two poles, his lines of critical investigation move, in terms of dominant themes, inward to a detailed analysis of a dozen or more books by five American authors, in themselves and in relationship to each other, their authors, and their backgrounds, and outward to the limits of cultural history from ancient Greece to modern America.

There is no single conclusion that can be drawn from this mass of evidence, much of it subjective, and its critical synthesis and interpretation. The scholar may be most impressed by the first ambitious application of



Walt Whitman

a current theory of historical criticism, the specialist by the new knowledge of the writings of one or more of the authors concerned. For example, this is the first full and accurate record of the friendship between Hawthorne and Melville, and corrects, by an examination of Melville's markings in his own copies of Hawthorne's books, the erroneous impressions left by Mumford's treatment of the problem.

For the reader who is not concerned with such technical questions, however, the book presents at least one important lesson: that even in our short century and a half of national existence, we have created a native myth of the democratic man, capable of all the range of experience of truth and error, good and evil, of the traditional heroic man, and that American literature has at least once explored and expressed the eternal verities of that myth. In a time of crisis this is the sort of assurance that we need.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 376)

TRUMBULL:

PROGRESS OF DULNESS

Ye parents, ...
Say, can ye think that forms so fine
Were made for nothing but to shine,
With lips of rose and cheeks of cherry
Outdo the works of statuary?
. . . . . .
Can female sense no trophies raise?
Are dress and beauty all their praise?

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Return of the Activist

THE CAPTAIN FROM CONNECTICUT. By C. S. Forester. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1941. 344 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

MR. FORESTER'S novel is a frank return to the sea-yarn formula of Captain Marryat and James Fenimore Cooper both with respect to the time and substance of the story and with respect to the technique. The time is the Naval War of 1812; the tale itself concerns the adventures of a Yankee frigate in running the British blockade of Long Island, preying on West Indies commerce, and eluding capture by a superior British force; and the chief characters are the captain of the frigate, his weaker brother, the conventional beef-and-blood British ship captain, and the French nobleman of the old regime with the lovely daughter.

The story bears marks of haste and improvisation: the captain's weaker brother deserts the ship to marry a Frenchwoman, but nothing comes of a character and an episode that threatened in the earlier part of the novel to have important consequences for Captain Peabody; and the whole manipulation of the plot after the American frigate is cornered in Martinique harbor with, as the dust-jacket remarks, "some surprising results," resembles the dramatic improvisations which conclude "The Pilot," "Midshipman Easy," or (to go on land) "Rob Roy." The characters are sufficient for romantic narrative, but they are without depth and have only elementary psychology; and the reader of my generation is inclined, in the last third of the story, to wonder whether he isn't reading a novel contemporary with "Monsieur Beaucaire."

Nevertheless, the return to activist fiction is a necessary counterpart to the immense absorption of contemporary novelists in the irrational psychology of the inner life. It is not without meaning that the age which has seen the profound influence of Freud permeating fiction in English has seen also the return of historical romance to the booksellers' shelves. The defect of psychological fiction, though esthetic theory will not admit it, is the failure to tell a story; and though the novel as a work of art has lofty artistic pretensions, the fact is that the public insists on being entertained. The great English novelists—Fielding, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Wells, Galsworthy, and how many more!—have never scorned this obligation. They kept their fiction in the stream of general life, and the stream of general life kept their fiction careless, generous, ample, and essentially sane.

I do not regard Mr. Forester as a writer of the rank of Fielding, Scott, Dickens, and so forth. But the success of "Captain Horatio Hornblower," the success of historical romance generally, the public delight in heroes and heroines whose actions they can follow and whose ethics they can comprehend, suggest that the novelist of *préciosité* sensibilities makes a mistake in supposing that the commercial success of narrative is beneath the dignity of art. Precisely as it is the chief business of a play to entertain people in a theater, so it is still the chief business of fiction to entertain the reader by story-telling, and when story-telling disappears, the reader is likely to go to the movies. I wonder what Sir Walter would say to the fine-spun complexities of much advanced fiction? I wonder also what Dr. Johnson would say to the even finelier spun theories of art which bulwark this fiction and give it a factitious importance? We do not want to return to the naive technique of "Rob Roy," but I suspect the writing of books like "The Captain from Connecticut" is symptomatic of the profound discontent of novel-readers with the "art" novel of our day.

Howard Coster

C. S. Forester

Howard Mumford Jones is a member of the English Department of Harvard University and a writer and critic of note.

"Man of Singular Desert"

ANDREW MARVELL. By M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas. Cambridge University Press. 1940. 161 *pp.* $2.25.

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

WITH wit and with discernment, these two English scholars—who are subtle critics as well—have written, in an astonishingly brief compass, what I take to be the best book about Andrew Marvell since Legouis's monumental study in French. In spite of T. S. Eliot's excellent account of him in his discussion of the "Metaphysical" school, this "man of singular desert"—poet, polemicist, politician, theologian, scholar, satirist—has been largely neglected. William Empson, I think, was the first to treat him, in our day, as he deserves; but on the whole, he has been regarded as a poet of one poem—"To his Coy Mistresse." This little book is a powerful restoration of the balance.

The authors discuss Marvell as he is revealed in the different aspects of his work: the pastoral, the satirical, the controversial, and the epistolary; this is not a biography, since, as they point out, "[his] life and achievements were of a sure and civilized kind which do not so readily invite analysis as acceptance." To me, the most valuable part of their work is the analysis of Marvell's controversy with Archdeacon Parker of Canterbury. "The Rehearsal Transpos'd," to say nothing of Parker's three books which it attacked, is tough meat even for the sympathetic general reader; but this summary of it is a masterpiece of intelligent exposition. The same is true of the chapter on the minor controversial works and the letters. The criticism of the lyric poems is less extensive, though hardly less rewarding. The authors are Empsonians, I should say: at any rate, they follow the method indicated in "Some Versions of Pastoral," and their conclusions, like the conclusions of that book, are highly provocative. It is here that one wishes that their space had been less limited. Their analysis of portions of "The Nymph complaining for the death of her Faun" (the Faun is the *Agnus Dei*, and the Nymph's love for it represents the love of the Church for Christ) is so discriminating, so sure, that it seems a pity that more of the poetry was not publicly subjected to their discipline. But what they have given us makes a *libellus aureus*, a golden little book, one which no lover of English poetry will care to miss.

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YOUR HOME

As one looks back upon American history it becomes clearer and clearer how much we sacrificed of our national inheritance of human experience in the materialistic century just concluding. Manifest destiny they used to call it, but now the less complimentary term of "get-rich quick" seems more appropriate. Swarms of aliens brought in to exploit our steel and coal and lumber, tens and thousands of homes deserted in the rush to the West, farms gone back to wilderness in the East, nomads camping for a few years only in a city or on a ranch or a plantation, then on to another. New York, in which only the poor and a few of the very rich seem to have been born where they live; California, telling stories of Iowa or Missouri under eucalyptuses; Connecticut, where the centuries-old organism of church and school and graveyard and green has become a shifting colony of artists, writers, and bankers on a holiday! It is no wonder that the traditions of the American soil have been almost forgotten, are unknown to its present inhabitants; that they have lost their power to inspire with the sense of the continuity of human experience.

A Thoreau wandering the Massachusetts countryside now, would have to go to written sources for the anecdotes of the past he collected from his Concord farmers. Those swamps, those hills, are just swamps and hills to the folks that have moved in. No Puck of Pook's hill could materialize from behind a Colorado spruce to tell the children stories of Spanish adventurers or Indian fights, because that strong sense of the past that broods over Roman-Saxon England has been dimmed in our migatory generation. We get our history from books not the land.

Lewis and Clark crossed the orchard where your Western apples grow; this deserted road over the lower Berkshires was a tribute trail of the six nations. Captain Kidd's widow lived near Sutton Place, and deeded her farm to Queen Anne when her husband was living.

Rochambeau led his French army down that quiet Connecticut valley. There was a Spanish Mission on the Chesapeake. Across a Delaware beach, a wilful man drove a wilful woman behind his blooded horses into the sea until, as they began to swim, she consented at last to talk to him. These oaks are seeded from the greater oaks where planks made tiny ships that sailed from a harbor no bigger than a cove to savage Africa and the Antarctic. On this island, the theft of the Mississippi was plotted. Through these woods Jonathan Edwards, riding to preach to his unwilling Indians, pinned a note to his saddle to record each conclusion of his great argument for the freedom of the will.

It is important that the heritage of American memories should not become abstract. If, with automobiles and airplanes, we shall presumably continue to live extensively rather than intensively in a geographical sense, nevertheless, now that the get-rich-quick age comes to an end, it is probable that our interests in human, as well as in economic, values will rapidly increase. It has grown smartly in the past two decades as witness the innumerable pageants, and the historical dramas celebrating what once happened in North Carolina or Colorado. One series of books is making our rivers more than names. New town histories, not chiefly genealogical, are being written. It may some day be possible to get such maps of our regions as Michelin provided for France, where not merely roads and towns will be indicated, but scenes and historic and even geological and botanical phenomena. Who that has used them has not longed for Michelin maps for Virginia or Utah or Paumanok or the valley of the Columbia or the Connecticut?

The most solid contribution to this revival of our interest in the land is surely the remarkable series of W.P.A. American Guides, to be completed this year. Here is a job, long needing to be done, which was probably beyond the powers of private enterprise. Here, also, is proof that work created by the government to give employment can be as vigorous and conscientious and useful as any profit-making scheme. For these Guides have gone beyond the obvious, which was to supply for each state a compendium of practical knowledge of history, economics, geography, transportation, and in every instance examined by us, have enriched their utilitarian content by eager delving into social and personal history. It is not too much to say that the most valuable reading in these texts is to be found in the small print addenda to accounts of towns, houses, and crossroads, in which the intensely human history of the spot, so much more important to the dwellers when it happened than the flow of political or economic history is recorded in anecdote or description.

A reader with time on his hands and a taste for history could do worse than to buy the whole series and read them from cover to cover. He would get a new idea of American history. This is a stiff recommendation. But as there are few intellectually curious Americans who have not lived to be at home in at least three states, so there are few readers of our acquaintance who should not own and use and browse in more than one of these Guides. It is remarkable how your city streets, your rural routes, the contours of your land, its unsuspected memorials and deep-going influences from the past, will come to life. Take a Sunday while there is still gasoline, and your car, and the right books, and push out away from the main roads, following history. Or, on your own feet learn how your city grew and why, and who lived there. You will find in the Guides material that will give you new insight into what you had thought the familiar.

H. S. C.

America, 1941

By Robert Nathan

LIBERTY? Liberty? What is liberty?
It is the eye blind to cruelty,
The arm nerveless before oppression.
It is the fear of death, the fear of loss
and discomfort.
That is liberty. For that we had
dreams.
For that we made a new world.
Flee into the bowels of it, you brave
men;
Flee to the home of the brave, behind
the high mountains;
Fly to the land of the free, to the
parched desert
Which nobody wants.
Liberty—Oh lovely word, musical,
Like God, men and women have died
for you—
But only in Greece, or in Jugoslavia.
In America
It is thought cheaper to get along
without trouble.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the *SRL* Reader

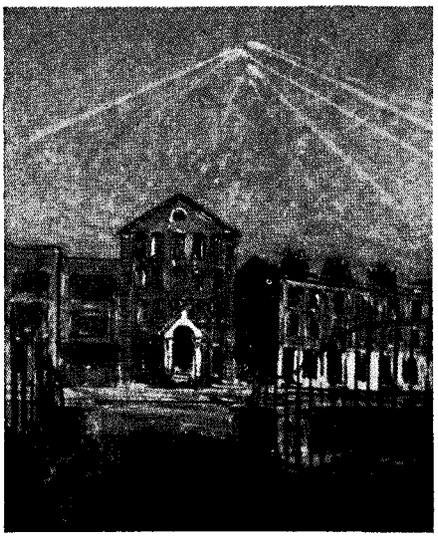
Elmer Davis, Contributing Editor of the SRL, has just returned from London, where he broadcast to America for the Columbia Broadcasting System. The greater part of Mr. Davis's report of his observations, given on his return over the radio, is published below in the form of a letter to our readers.

THIS is a report on what I saw and heard in England, a report which will be pretty largely a digest and conclusions. That is true partly because it's hard to summarize twenty-five days of observation in fifteen minutes, but still more so because a good deal of factual information was given to me in confidence and because I saw a good many things which the censorship will not permit to be described in detail, for fear of giving information to the enemy. Naturally, if they show you things that you couldn't talk about under the censorship, it's on the understanding that you won't give them away when you're beyond the censor's reach. But the censorship does not control and does not try to control the conclusions that may be drawn from what you see. So if I tell you how it seems to me, the conclusions are based on everything I saw and heard and they have been further checked by conversations with a number of expert American correspondents who have been there much longer than I was and have seen England under a much greater variety of conditions than my brief visit allowed.

Well, the first conclusion and the main conclusion that I reached is that Lindbergh is wrong when he says it is too late to win this war, just as wrong as I believe he is when he says that if we wait a few years, it will be easy for us to win the next one. This war can be won, but it won't be easy. It probably cannot be won unless the American people want to win it badly enough to work at it—harder than we are working now, which is to say that unless we produce more war material than we are producing now and see that far more of what we produce gets to England, the war may be lost. And if it is lost, we lose it—not just the English. They might lose it more disastrously than we would, at least at first, but I don't know of any informed persons who doubts that an eventual collapse of England would seriously endanger the security of the United States. No such collapse is at all in prospect now. I did not meet a single Englishman or English woman who would admit that they would ever quit, and unquestionably they mean it—so far as conscious intention goes. One of the ablest American observers of England told me he thought those people could hold out just as long as they may have to hold out, provided they had a reasonable hope of ultimate victory. But if they ever lose that hope, then physical and nervous endurance might break down sooner than would be expected.

The dangers which confront them are three: invasion, the air raids, and last and most serious, the German campaign against shipping. Nobody knows of course whether the Germans will try invasion or not, but it is the prevalent belief among men in authority and the general public too, that they probably will try it, that most likely they will try it toward the end of this summer and that it can be beaten off. The British are better prepared to meet it with every month that passes, but it's an axiom in military affairs that no defense is ever as good as it ought to be. You must go on improving it as long as you can. The one thing sure is that if the Germans do try it, they will try it hard; they will use plenty of dive-bombers; they will probably try to land parachute troops all over the Island in the hope of disorganizing communications and forcing the British to fight on a hundred fronts, and almost certainly they will use gas. In other words, even if the attack is beaten off, and the British all seem to believe that it can be beaten off, but even so, it may do a tremendous amount of damage which would take a long time to repair.

About air raids, I can only tell you what I heard, because I never saw one. There were bad ones on Plymouth and Liverpool while I was in London; there was a bad one in London while I was in Bristol, but I always happened to miss them and everybody tells me I was lucky. From all accounts, a big one is a very terrible thing and people talk about it afterwards with a sort of loathing and disgust as if it was not merely terrible and dangerous but something unnatural and obscene, as it would be if the human race were really civilized. Nevertheless, people stand it. They all say they are scared, but they all behave courageously. The American correspondents in London have properly recognized that this is the big news about the air war, that England can take it. But perhaps because the correspondents are taking it themselves, they have not given us much of an idea of how much they have to take. An air raid is something more than a noisy show which destroys well-known buildings and gives people an opportunity to display courage. It's something that kills people—women and children as well as men, and often kills them in a very painful and disgusting way, or which is worse, messes them up and doesn't kill them. It may shock the American people to be reminded of that, but that's the kind of world we live in, and if we can't stand thinking about it, it's going to be just too bad for us. It is true that air raids on German cities have precisely the same effect on innocent non-combatants. It's a nasty and revolting way to make war, but that is the way you've got to make war nowadays if you want to win, and there is some difference between a people that fights that way to save its own liberties and restore those of others and a people that fights that way in order to conquer the world.



Painting by Lord Methuen
London by Moonlight

Well, that is what the English are taking. So far they've had to take a good deal more of it than the Germans. There is not one English city, no matter how badly blitzed, that is not still a going concern. But aside from the loss of life and the destruction of property, a series of big raids will slow things down, make everything harder and more inconvenient. I visited Southampton, Plymouth, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Coventry—all towns that have had not one but many mass raids. Everywhere the damage done to actual military objectives was small, but when you flatten out most of the business district

(Continued on page 17)

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Neilson . . .

THE HOUSE I KNEW. By Elizabeth Neilson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1941. 338 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by KLAUS LAMBRECHT

THERE is no action in this book, nothing of what one might call a plot, almost no dialogue, and its only events are those of a slow-moving life lived in the peace of a time of which we know but the shadows. And yet it has a charm of its own that fascinates the reader and lingers in his mind long after he has finished reading. It recalls a world we are always eager to recapture in these days of destruction, a world that quickly vanished under the marching feet of barbarism. Mrs. Neilson is wrong when she says in her short introduction that what she has written is nothing more than a personal record of a childhood and youth lived in Southern Germany. It goes far beyond pure biographical description. True, the scope is narrow, but what emerges *from the dreamlike recollections*, as interpreted by a mature mind, a discreet but vivid writer, is a strikingly colorful picture of the Germany before the first World War, slightly nostalgic but never sentimental.

This Germany which Mrs. Neilson knew had its most lively reflection in the house where she grew up, the house of her father which stood in a little town at the foot of the Black Forest, one of the most romantic spots in Germany. The house was always crowded with people—politicians, actors, musicians, and plain peasants—people shrewd and amiable, kind and generous, pathetic, narrow-minded, hateful and repulsive, who to the day-dreaming child were just like so many images passing before her unawakened mind. Later, when she learned of all the tragedies in those people's lives, of their ambitions and frustrations, their background and their world of which she was a part became more distinct and took on a realistic shape. It is their stories, much more than her own, that the author has written, the stories of people of yesterday whose children and grandchildren are the Nazis of today.

Although the author never refers to the present time, the implication seems to be that this Germany, the gay, delightful, and enchanting Germany, the country of great poets, musicians, and philosophers, cannot be dead, even though the jacket of the book tells us that Hitler killed it. It cannot be dead because its qualities are immanent. It can merely be temporarily infected with disease.

Seymour . . .

FOOL OF TIME. By Beatrice Kean Seymour. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 346 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by CURRIE CABOT

HERE, perhaps, is one of the last of those English novels where life moves in a charmed and appointed groove. It is as though Mrs. Seymour had wanted to write about this life, just once more, a melody in counterpoint against the threatening—and always louder—drum-beats of war. Also she seems to wish to reassert that "the concern of the novelist is with human beings." Her story, thoughtfully calculated, worked out with infinite care, is bent to this end. It tells of an English woman's return from America—in the summer of 1937—to the English country-life she has always known, a life still unchanged, where the war in Spain, a rumble of distant thunder is not yet recognized as a storm-warning.

Carin, the exquisite heroine, whose luxurious problem it is simply to *choose* a man, to adjust to perfection the nuances of her inner life, is aware, and very sharply aware, of the world's turmoil. But Carin and the other characters, so deftly, so thoughtfully worked out—what is it they lack? They are all, with the exception of the really enchanting figure of Stephen, a little boy of six, literary characters, domesticated through long years of living in the pages of English fiction, conventional even in their wildnesses. At its best, this kind of thing, urbane and civilized drawing-room comedy, is delightful, and the English can do it better than anyone else, but the pattern, too cool, too rigid, and too familiar, muffles the haunting overtones that Mrs. Seymour would have us hear.

J. S. Balch

Balch . . .

LAMPS AT HIGH NOON. By J. S. Balch. New York: Modern Age Books. 1941. 403 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by FRANCES SMYTH

WHEN young Charlie Gest is appointed to an administrative post in a regional office of the WPA Writers' Project, he becomes the chief wage earner of the Gest household and is for the first time accepted by his family on his own terms: as a writer. Charlie's subsequent life at home and his experiences with the Project provide the material for a first novel that reveals admirable critical balance and an extraordinary sensitivity to the cadences and inflexions of everyday speech.

Mrs. Gest, Charlie's mother, is the most lovingly conceived and vividly rendered of the persons in the book. More than a little reminiscent of the young inventor's mother in Daniel Fuchs's "Homage to Blenholt," she is none the less a free-standing, entirely satisfying character. Presented half-sentimentally and half-farcically, she is always moving and generally entertaining. Her usual form of address is a cross between invective and lamentation, rich in phrases wrenched out of Jewish folk-lore and used to spectacular effect, and stiffened with heavy sarcasm. Charlie's love for her and his almost constant exasperation with her are honestly and expertly displayed.

In his approach to the Project, Mr. Balch has been less brilliant as a novelist, but he has been very sound as a commentator. Entirely open in his account of the vices assignable to incompetent personnel and unscrupulous political pressure, he has still not sunk to cheap or stupid cynicism. Through Charlie's high, young hopes and his disillusionment he has projected the tragedy implicit in the basic conception of all the Arts Projects: the irreconcilable opposition inherent in any organization set up to produce creative work and simultaneously to provide relief for the destitute. Charlie never gets to do any writing, and he gives a job to an almost illiterate truck-driver, but he knows that neither of those things could be helped.

There are many faults of structure and proportion in this novel, and many echoes of other, older novelists. None of these faults seems permanent nor dangerous, and if Mr. Balch can keep his feeling for the flow of human speech and his affectionate, rueful regard for human actviity, he doesn't have to worry about what comes next.

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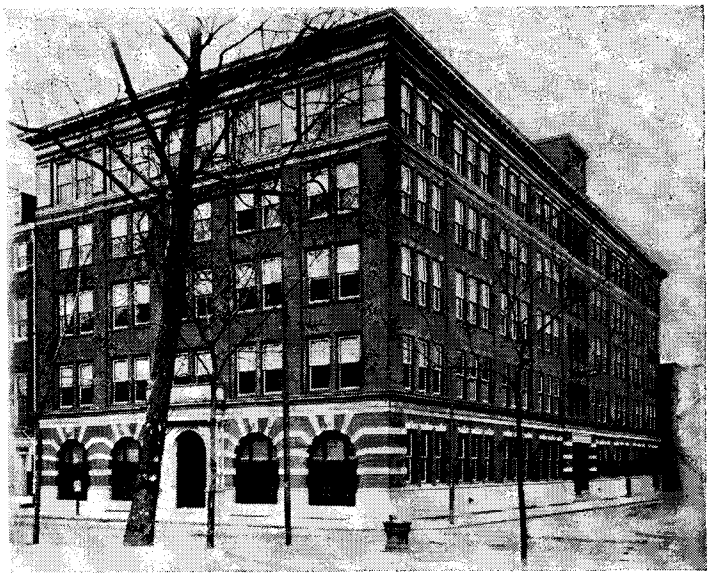
J. B. Lippincott Co.

"An Eye to the Book Chance"

EDITH M. STERN



J. B. Lippincott Building, Philadelphia.

ABOUT the middle of the last century, at a book auction in Boston, J. B. Lippincott and Company offered "elegant Family Bibles" for which only three dollars apiece were bid. "Why, gentlemen," protested the Lippincott representative, "these clasps alone on this Bible cost five dollars." John Doyle, a New York bookseller, examined the clasps. "Why, we can buy such clasps as these in New York for two-fifty," he said. "Yes, Mr. Doyle," the Lippincott man replied, "but, you know, you have more brass in New York than we have in Philadelphia."

Be the brass situation what it may, at any rate there's gold in Philadelphia's East Washington Square. To most of us, nowadays, a sense of security is in about the same category as perpetual motion, and with book sales what they are at the moment the last place you'd expect to feel it strongly is in a publishing house. Acquaintance, therefore, with J. B. Lippincott Company in 1941 is a heartening experience: dating from Washington's second administration, the firm stands as durable, as rich, as venerable yet living, as Philadelphia itself.

Set-up, list, personnel—all have a "Here I am, here I will be" air. Rarely has a Lippincott employee been fired; superannuated workers are pensioned, and sometimes their widows as well. Joseph W. Lippincott is the third generation of his family to head the firm, and his son, "young Joe," now secretary and in the manufacturing department, will in all probability be the fourth. Rudolph Greiner, credit manager, has never been elsewhere employed and is rounding out his fifty-first year with the business: he remembers when clerks had a ten to eleven hour day, six days a week. Ellis W. Bacon, head of the huge medical department, began as a stock boy half a century ago; his father, too, was with Lippincott's for fifty years. Ralph Bicknell, production, is designing books after forty years' service. J. Jefferson Jones, gentle, dignified, and cultured as his title "Literary Director" suggests, entered the book business in 1905 as Lippincott's advertising manager, returning to the firm in 1925 after he had worked for George H. Doran, and Dodd, Mead, and acted as managing director of the New York house of John Lane.

An antiquated wooden sign, stating simply "J. B. Lippincott Company, Publishers, Philadelphia, U.S.A." dominates the crowded first floor of the Edwardian building whose worn furniture and sparsely adorned walls give no hint of the continual profits from a Gibraltar-like back list and current sellers. Lippincott's goes on and on, not like the brook, but like the swelling river.

LATEST accretion is the controlling interest in that relative parvenu, Frederick A. Stokes Company, aged only sixty. The deal was announced on May seventeenth, after weeks of negotiations with bankers and lawyers, and is comparable in magnitude to the Doubleday-Doran, Appleton-Century hyphenations. Stokes has a list of 1000 trade titles, 400 of them juveniles that include such properties as "Little Black Sambo," the Dr. Dolittle books, and the works of Munro Leaf. Helen Dean Fish will continue in charge of Stokes's juvenile department. Horace W. and F. Brett Stokes will, for the present, be associated in an advisory capacity. Their father, founder of their firm, was a close personal friend of J. B. Lippincott, J.W.'s predecessor. George H. Doran described him as "the beau ideal of publishing," one of its "ornaments." His spirit will be at home with the Lippincotts and their traditions.

Only six months ago the Philadelphia whale swallowed another New York fish—Carrick and Evans, "younger," almost the youngest, publishers. This move strengthened the Lippincott list with Frank O. Hough whose "Neutral Ground" is a current best seller, and, among others, with David Loth, John Chamberlain, and Princess Paul Sapieha of "Polish Profile." Robert F. Evans has gone into service with the Army: Lynn Carrick remains in Lippincott's New York editorial office, together with George Stevens, former editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

For such expansion in a dangerous and incalculable period in national affairs, Lippincott's has its own historical precedents. In 1861, in the face of what one of the family characterized as "the appalling political outlook," an expensive move was made to a new marble-fronted building, which the firm occupied until it was destroyed by fire in 1899. Time and time again shrewd and daring moves threw good money after good. When the Boston firm that had been publishing Prescott failed in 1857, Lippincott's acquired the plates of fifteen of his books from his heirs, because its offer of $5000 and $6000 guaranteed copyright a year topped any of the bids made by the Boston house, more logical successors. During the turbulent days just before the Civil War, Lippincott's swelled its coffers through heavy sales of military manuals to the Southern states. And in 1850, Joshua Ballinger Lippincott, "against the advice of his friends," bought Grigg, Elliot and Company, one of the most successful publishers of its time.

Grigg and Elliott had begun as Jacob Johnson's small book store on High Street, Philadelphia, in 1792, and had flourished under four different names. Lippincott himself, a New Jersey Quaker, enters the picture as an employee of bookseller Clark in 1827. In 1836 he bought his employer's business and then, as J. B. Lippincott and Company published on his own, specializing in religious books. After the 1850 amalgamation Lippincott's list covered the whole field of literature, medicine, and education, and by 1853 annual sales topped $1,500,000. In 1855 the

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business was organized as a joint stock company, with the "and" dropped from its name, and capitalized at $1,000,000. Craige Lippincott succeeded his father as president in 1856; J. Bertram Lippincott followed when Craige died in 1911. Brisk, be-moustached Joseph Wharton Lippincott, business man and sportsman, carries on the Philadelphia success story today.

GRAND-SCALE publishing has never feazed the Lippincotts. Very early on their lists came "The Comprehensive Commentary of the Bible" and "The Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge." A 2300 page "Pronouncing Dictionary of Biography and Mythology" was the fruit of Dr. Joseph Thomas's two year, Lippincott-financed sojourn in the Orient, and of ten years' labor by a corps of editors. "The Dictionary of English Literature" in three volumes, Lippincott's Gazette in two volumes, Chambers Encyclopaedia for Young People in ten, the Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, twenty-two volumes of Thackeray, thirty of Dickens, and forty-seven of Bulwer Lytton have borne the Lippincott imprint. The medical department is gargantuan. Among others, four volumes on "Diseases of the Eye," and on "Diseases of Children," respectively, three on "Principles and Practices of Surgery," anatomical tomes, medical quarterlies, and ambitious digest periodicals have followed upon the publication of twenty-five year old Dr. Samuel D. Gross's "Anatomy, Physiology and Diseases of the Bones and Joints" in 1830. A succession of nursing books have progressed, along with the profession's standards, from one in 1878 whose preface stated that "these gentle helpers need to have their kindness guided by simple knowledge and simple rules, otherwise they might do more harm than good" to the latest technicalities for R.N.'s. In 1833 the first edition of the pharmaceutically indispensable U.S. Dispensatory, 1073 pages, appeared: the twenty-second edition, up-to-the-minute with hormones, vitamins, and sulfanilamide, has 1802 pages. The textbook department is handled in Chicago by Howard Bauernfeind, formerly Superintendent of Schools in Illinois.

Until fairly recently, few fiction best sellers graced the Lippincott lists. True, there was Robert Hitchens's "Bella Donna" in 1909 and Hall Caine's "The Woman Thou Gavest Me" in 1913. And there was Amelie Rives's "The Quick or the Dead?" which caused a sensation in 1888. The story of a widow who feels that she is violating her husband's memory by falling in love again, it was the first "sex" novel. "The pure will see purity—the foul-minded, foulness," wrote the author in a preface to the 1916 edition. After the heroine gets as far as a kiss, on page 88—and never further—she soliloquizes: "I have desecrated myself. Oh, if that kiss had only burned off my lips! Oh, can't I die?"

But on the whole the Lippincott fiction lists in those days relied largely on innocuous lady authors like Marie Corelli and "The Duchess" one of whose most popular titles was "Airy Fairy Lillian." Such books had a market, for all that there were few rental libraries, in the days of $1.50 novels and fifty and seventy-five cent paperbacks. Today, still, the light novels of Grace Livingston Hill steadily sell from ten to twenty-five thousand copies a year. Lippincott's publishes three of them a year, has published seventy.

Biographies, too, run along pleasingly. There have been Hilaire Belloc's "Richelieu" and "Wolsey," written at Jones's instigation; Brousseau's "Anatole France"; Hector Bolitho's "Edward the VIII," hastily rewritten before going to press in accordance with *l'affaire Simpson;* "King Lehr and the Gilded Age" and, a current best seller, René Kraus's "Winston Churchill." As for juveniles, Lippincott's does very nicely under the direction of Mary Harvey and with Dan Beard, Ilin, Osa Johnson, and Rackham among its Names.

Latterly, into the midst of all such safe, non-gambling titles have come spectacular successes, with "Kitty Foyle" on the best seller lists 1939-40. Lippincott's had four best sellers, including "I Married Adventure," and "Stars on the Sea," during 1940, three so far this year.

And during recent years, too, new blood has been infused into the organization: editorially Bertram Lippincott, in his early forties, the young editors in New York, and still younger Harry F. West, associate editor in Philadelphia. Percy A. Loring, sales manager, brings to pushing books his experience as General Manager for A. and C. Boni and as Sales Manager for Blue Ribbon Books, Reynal and Hitchcock, and the John Day Company. Frank Frazier, dynamic advertising and publicity director, ex-marine, ex-auto mechanic, ex-reporter, present president of the Philadelphia Booksellers' Association, stages a party now and then and goes in for gadgets to promote titles—Kitty Foyle snowstorms, wackaroos to introduce a humorous book, even a bit of dried fish to herald a cook book.

An arrangement with *Story Magazine* gives J. B. Lippincott Company first crack at books by promising short story writers. This is scouting in the most approved modern fashion: it's also how the firm got Ouida. Joshua B. Lippincott, seeing one of Ouida's stories serialized in a magazine, decided to publish it. Its title, "Held in Bondage; or, Granville de Vigne" was embarrassing in view of a certain delicate situation about which the South was touchy at the time; so, in book form, the publishers printed it as "Granville de Vigne; or, Held in Bondage" thus obviating a first impression that here was something else on slavery. An eye to the book chance—shrewd business judgment—family domination—conservatism plus courage—these are as new, and as old, as the house of Lippincott.

The Story of Angus Pettigrew

THE SHADOW OF THE HAWK. By Evelyn Scott. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1941. 494 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

IT is best to read this novel in purely receptive mood, from page to page, without trying to plumb Miss Scott's motives. For if you decide too soon just what she is doing, you will find almost at once that she has steered away from this to quite another course. And you will find, too, that whatever her plan, it is always exciting and original writing. To be specific, she seems at first to be preparing a very close and detailed study in individual psychology, with special attention to conditioned reflexes. Angus Pettigrew is ushered into our presence as a seven year old boy in a court room, watching his father being given a life sentence for murder. He watches his father waste and die in jail, and he watches his mother degenerate and grow spiritually corrupt under pressure. Such is the general outline. Inside this Miss Scott builds painstakingly out of the great miscellany of a boy's daily life, thoughts, words, dreams, and nightmares, as Angus recedes further and further from a hostile world.

Yet quite early in the story Miss Scott's attention passes from Angus to those about him. The focus of the novel expands, and the clinical study of Angus becomes lost in a widening series of light character studies. The whole atmosphere of the book has changed by now. The early study of Angus seems pointless, since even if he had not been marred by the first ten years of his life, he would have been anyhow by the second. The book, however, is a provocative work, always expressive of its writer's vigor and originality.

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Our Laws, Our Lives

THE CITIZEN AND THE LAW. By Morris Hadley. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1941. 363 *pp., with appendix and index.* $3.

Reviewed by JAMES REID PARKER

MR. HADLEY'S work is a valuable contribution to the ever-increasing group of books written to give the layman a better idea of the laws under which he lives. "The Citizen and the Law" does not compete with Mr. Ernest Mortenson's excellent "You Be the Judge," still the best book for an amateur to begin with, but amplifies it. There must be of course a good many amateurs who do not require that their introduction to law be made through the agency of a frolicsome primer (Mr. Mortenson's sense of fun and Mr. Alain's entertaining drawings make "You Be the Judge" agreeably painless), but can start with a stiffer dose. These hardier ones can proceed through Mr. Hadley's book, certainly, and not come to grief. Its extraordinarily comprehensive survey of the law as it touches our daily life may not be infused with wit, but it is very well written indeed and so competently organized that I don't believe the truly curious will object too strongly.

There are six major divisions: "The Law of Government," "The Law of Procedure," "The Law of Persons," "The Law of Property," "The Law of Organizations," and "The Law of Crimes." The third (Persons as Individuals, The Family, Infancy and Other Disabilities, Death, Domicile) and the fourth (Real Estate, Personal Property, Contracts) will be of special interest to the casual reader, who might well begin with these portions, for they deal mostly with a range of matters, some of which we are certain to experience. Not all, mercifully! Mr. Hadley's sure, sensible discussion of the rights and liabilities of property owners, for example, will enlist a reader's interest and make him want to turn back to the first section and probe the mysteries of government, its complex fabric and administration. In speaking of the first-rate organization of the book, perhaps I should have said that what I liked was the logic of its order, for it is unfortunately true that the arrangement is not designed to win the reader. The first section is the toughest, a little too much like a law-school text, to captivate those laymen who do not approach the book with a really firm determination to finish it. But with "The Law of Persons," things get much livelier, and Mr. Hadley, wisely realizing that the abstract inevitably palls, turns the reader into "Mr. Jones" and thereafter allows him every imaginable adventure, from marriage to mortgage, from rape to intestacy. Mr. Jones, never allowed a quiet moment and never let off anything, goes through a series of adventures that make Anthony Adverse's life seem as tranquil as that of a Cranford spinster.

Mr. Hadley, a member of the New York Bar, warns that he is better versed in the law of his own state than that which obtains in the remaining forty-seven, and that of necessity he must write primarily for New Yorkers, but he does such an occasional, unobtrusive job of footnoting when the rule elsewhere differs, that I don't think a Kansan or a Californian, a Rhode Islander or a Georgian, need worry unduly. Even if he cannot provide a special edition for each state ("Superman" of the comic strips might like to turn his attention to this task), Mr. Hadley is extremely thorough. His book is a good one, not only to read in the line of civic duty, but to keep on hand as a useful reference.

Nazis, Voodoos, and Green Faces

BUSH MASTER. By Nicol Smith. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1941. 315 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

NICOL SMITH'S "Burma Road" told less of the road than of a charming and volatile Nicol Smith whose flair for a dramatic yarn led him down bypaths far more interesting than the route itself. This second book, set in Dutch Guiana, is similarly full of good tales concerning the nether jungles and the strange men who inhabit them, the Arawak Indians, the transplanted African Djukas, and the convicts escaped from Devil's Island. In Paramaribo he met the sinister Bush Master, a German herpetologist, supposedly, who took him up the Corentijn River to look for a secret field of radium-bearing ore and a tribe of three-fingered Indians, but neither wonder materialized though there were strange doings indeed along the way. At sensationally close quarters he ran into boa constrictors, two-tailed alligators, vampire bats which feasted on children, monstrous Surinam toads and a great variety of mosquitoes. Sensational too was the butterfly hunting expedition from which he returned with the nickname, given him by lovely Singing Bee, of The Little Red Radish of the Jungle.

The Bush Master proved to be so cruelly capricious and intolerably domineering that Smith sent him back to Paramaribo, then continued on his own in pursuit of a white man, deep in the jungle, whom an Indian claimed to have seen. The quest was futile, though he did see unmistakably the print of the man's shoes. Upon his return to civilization he learned that the Bush Master was in reality a Nazi agent who sought to influence the natives through their witch doctors to whom he sold rare snakes, and that he was believed, furthermore, to have organized ten to fifteen thousand escaped convicts who had a colony far in the forest. Fantastic though much of it may be, the book is convincingly written, with considerable humor and sensitivity, and the tangential tales carry you around the passages of somewhat shrill description. These tales of voodoo, of the green-faced girls, of old Daddy Winkler who once saved Teddy Roosevelt, of the exquisite Orchid Princess and her Uncle, the tarantula, will hold the most skeptical by his upstanding hair.

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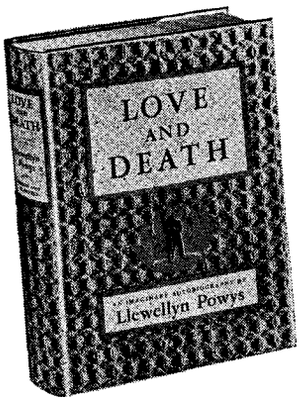

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Author, Author!

Glutton for Punishment. No one was more surprised than *Claire MacMurray* ("And Beat Him When He Sneezes") when she found herself a columnist on the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. And probably no one was more surprised than her colleagues when she liked it. Miss MacMurray (Mrs. Edward D. Howard in private life) found herself with an embarrassing amount of time on her hands when her young sons—the heroes of her amusing book—were all in school. She took a course in writing and sold her very first piece to the *Plain Dealer*. A little later Paul Bellamy, her editor, started her on a column. To her "still incredulous delight" she has been writing the column ever since 1936. Miss MacMurray regards herself first of all as a mother and gives that job priority over everything else.

In Brief: *Toyohiko Kagawa,* famous Japanese Christian, humanitarian, author of many books, is now in the United States. In New York he took time off from his duties as a member of the Japanese Christian Fellowship Deputation to begin negotiations for a patent on a new game which he calls chemical chess. He worked out the game during his recent prison term. His non-violent philosophy got him in trouble with the Japanese authorities and into jail. His next book will be a novel based on the life of Christ, "Behold the Man." . . .*Willard Robertson,* the Hollywood actor (you've seen him many times but probably didn't notice his name) who wrote "Moontide," has heard that Jean Gabin, the famous French movie actor, will play the hero of his novel as his first American film role . . . *Laura Krey* ("On the Long Tide") was not able to write for some months because of a broken thumb (she does not use a secretary). But she has been on a speaking tour and is now back at work on a new Texas novel.

Relaxation. *Elizabeth Hawes,* just back from several months on the West Coast of South America, has been making arrangements for publication of articles based on her trip. One prominent editor who had expressed great interest before Miss Hawes left told her: "Our readers are no longer interested in South America. All they want is headlines. If you could report that the Japs have landed on the West Coast of South America, we'd be interested." Miss Hawes asked, "But what do you give them for escape?" "Oh, that," the editor replied, "we always give them fiction."

EUGENE ARMFIELD.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

A PATCH-WORK POEM

The sonnet printed below is technically known as a cento. All of its fourteen lines were taken from well-known works of famous poets and reassembled by the author in, as he modestly says, "an attempt to make it sound like something that faintly suggested sense." This cento is by G. C. Haddow, of Hamilton, Ontario, and it was first printed in *The Saturday Review of Literature* for December 2, 1939. See how many of its lines you can repatriate before peeking at the answers on page 19. Allowing 10 points for each author correctly named, a score of 60 is good, 70 is better, and 80 or higher almost puts you in a class with Mr. Haddow.

"DESTINY"

1. When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
2. The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
3. And gathering swallows twitter in the skies
4. Where wealth accumulates and men decay,
5. Haunted forever by the eternal mind
6. I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
7. Our own felicity we make or find;
8. Charm strikes the sight, but merit wins the soul.
9. Alas, what boots it with incessant care
10. To bellow through the vast and boundless deep?
11. Earth has not anything to show more fair.
12. Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep
13. I am a part of all that I have met.
14. O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!

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AMERICA IN GUIDE BOOKS

(*Continued from page 5*)

as I learned from many a solemnly correct description of tiresome and architecturally worthless buildings, or the careful handling of local stuffed shirts, but the warning posts are there for the wary reader, plain as paragraph marks.

When you open one of the guides the first thing you usually see is a neat little explanation. "Iowa: A Guide to the Hawkeye State may be considered the result of a community effort. . . ." "Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State is a group enterprise." "Many Kansans have had a part in making this book." These polite sentences are trying to say something. To the reader it does not much matter whether the guides were seven thousand starving writers or the seven dwarfs. But the reader should at least note that, for the first time, the total resources of American communities—the experts, Mrs. Grundy, and the man on the curbstone—have been asked to give their all. From the solid, formal New England guides to the sophomore journalism of the cow country you have the feeling that in its own way each state has been combed as it never has before. Where you don't find the answers, as in the failure to explain the decline in literature, art, theatre, and music in Chicago, it is possible that there are no answers. But page after flawless page is as solid and expert as a concrete highway. This is not due to inherent brains on relief but to persistent cooperation between the Writers' Project and every person they thought could contribute to this enterprise. These people can look on a proud achievement in the measure to which they contributed to it.

Of the writing itself—for this is, after all, the work of writers, although many of them on the job must have often wondered whether it was or not—I wish I could say more. Sometimes you turn somersaults at a stray passage of purple rhetoric, as in a description of the aurora borealis in the Utah guide. Sometimes you wonder if your leg is being pulled, as when the South Dakota guide describing the Mt. Rushmore Memorial says, "At 2.1 mi. a person can stand directly under the nose of Washington, 500 ft. above, and sense the magnitude of the project." Or you may drowse through the fat-to-bursting Rhode Island guide, with its ponderous and scholarly prose. Still, for all the many writers, and all the hash and rehash of successive editings, the work has style. As writing it measures up to a satisfactory standard.

My personal feeling is that the first time around America got more than it bargained for. I hope the guides go on into new editions. I wish they were more uniform and better indexed. I wish an enterprising syndicate of publishers would buy the plates and reissue them, perhaps even more cheaply than they were originally published. I wish publishers would sell these books like gum instead of plodding along in their stiff ruts of commonplace advertising and bookish promotion. We have something now, and we ought to keep it alive and make it grow into a national institution. There ought to be more good walks in the guides, and more boat trips; people will get out of their sedans if they are encouraged. The natural science sections ought to be amplified so that you could really identify plants and birds from the descriptions. There can be a little more courage in choosing illustrations, the captions ought to have more facts, and the maps can be improved.

Government started this. Like a lot of other good things government started, it may let it die. It seems logical to ask what the publishers are going to do about it.

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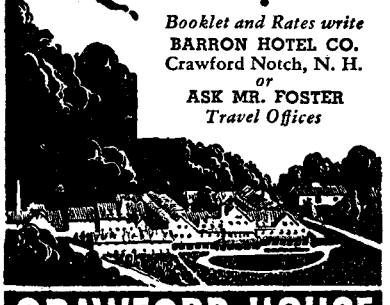

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THE NEW BOOKS

Biography

I'LL SING ONE SONG. By Willie Snow Ethridge. Macmillan. 1941. 156 *pp.* $1.75.

Mrs. Ethridge, stung to wakefulness one morning by the sound of a plane flying above her Kentucky farm house, decided to focus her eyes on the simple, sweet, and normal aspects of her life; to record them against the dubious future. The result is a charming and amusing journal of the activities of the Ethridge family from September '39 to September '40. The things that happen are of no great importance. The well runs dry, but Lewis, the black Moses, brings forth water; the young son goes reluctantly to a blind date and finds a glamor girl; a yachting party on the Ohio is memorable for its moon and its chicken gumbo; a beagling party is made hilarious by Mrs. Ethridge's rabbit-lined jacket so attractive to the hounds; the whirl of Derby week and the quaint behavior of guests is pictured with good-natured acerbity; the mail-order purchase of a golf-rug from Abercrombie and Fitch; adventures with a camera; adventures with a new baby; an exciting episode of a beloved horse caught in quicksand. All these are entertaining and human, and justify, in their gentle commonplaceness, Mrs. Ethridge's desire to catch and hold them. It is a perfect book for reading aloud and the author has done what she set out to do, sharpen her sense of daily living against a backdrop which may be changed but which cannot, for her, and for people like her, who wish to remember, be utterly destroyed.

R. L.

Fiction

THE BITTER ROOTS. By Norman Macleod. Smith & Durrell. 1941. $2.50.

It is hard to think of this book as a novel. It is more a chart—and like a chart it has no beginning or end, or shape, except the accidental one of fact, and consequently is not as interesting as a picture would be. There is no discoverable story, and the small boy Pauly, whom one feels to be the central character, is being continually lost in a crowd of noisy, brawling figures. It is a sharp, rawly vigorous account of the seamier side of adolescent life in a western American town at the time of America's entrance into the last war, and the chapter headings, quoting in italics certain headlines and topical songs of the period, fill the reader with an uncomfortable sense that he should perhaps be drawing some moral relevant to the present moment from these rather dismal snapshots of the American scene.

Newsreels of the immediate past have an inevitable sameness: this one is made up of a bleak small town; some tough boys; soldiers going off to war and coming back again; adolescent discoveries in sex. Perhaps it is the kind of book that is written to purge some hatred or grudge against life from the author's mind. One puts it down with weariness and distaste, not doubting its graphic truth, but finding in it, after all, no particular significance.

X. Y.

Miscellaneous

MEDICINE AND HUMAN WELFARE. By Henry E. Sigerist. Yale University Press. 1941. 148 *pp.* $2.50.

The history of medicine is the story of man's unceasing conflict with his invisible enemies, pain and disease. But it is also the story of the impact of the group attitude toward disease, health, and the physician upon successive cultures. In this collection of lectures, the sixteenth series of the Terry Foundation of Yale University, Dr. Sigerist finds a key to the clarification of our own social trends in a review of the social aspects of medicine's past. "History," he states, "points out the direction in which medicine is moving." The argument is presented under three headings. In the first he briefly traces the conception of disease from the days of religious medicine down to the present, emphasizes the great advances that have been made in the conquering of epidemics etc., but shows—with figures—that disease is still not only the cause of endless suffering but also "a tremendous economic burden to the population." The second section treats of health not only as the opposite of disease, but as a positive factor in individual and community life. Again we have the historical background of our present attitude; the rise of the health movement in the 18th century; the failure of Germany's National Health Movement of a century ago; a glimpse of our own public health problems. The third section deals with the physician and is perhaps the most interesting. In his survey of the physician's place in society down through the ages, Dr. Sigerist gives special attention to his economic status; shows how he was forced to abandon medieval ideas of free service and found himself "against his will and in spite of desperate resistance in a highly competitive business"; declares that the complexities of our industrial civilization, the greatly widened scope of the medical field, the advances in medical knowledge all combine to demand "a new type of doctor." The book ends with a prognostication of the next chapter in the story of medical history. As Dr. Sigerist visualizes this future, scientific research will be supplemented by sociological research, the goal of every

(*Continued on page* 21)

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REPORT ON BRITAIN

(*Continued from page 9*)

of a town, you seriously interfere with the lives of the people who live there, making it far harder for them to buy the things they need from day to day. You make them lose time and waste effort and by so much you reduce their efficiency. Also repeated blitzes night after night, wear people out; nervous strain and physical fatigue get them down.

Plymouth had five bad ones within a week. I was there ten days after the last one and I saw no smiles in Plymouth. They all looked strained, anxious, exhausted. They were still working—working under great difficulties; half the population living in villages in the back country with very inadequate transportation and taking hours to get to and from the town, so that the efficiency of Plymouth as a community had been for the time being considerably reduced. That is an extreme case. Plymouth is worse off than any other town in England, but it's what may happen elsewhere unless the British Air Force gets the upperhand.

Lately the British night fighters have had much success in knocking down the bombers. If they continue that success during the coming full moon, the raids may no longer be such a problem, while the nights are short. But next winter when it gets dark at 4:00 o'clock and the raiders come over by 6:00 and stay overhead on dark nights for twelve hours, when next winter comes, the people of the British cities are likely to find the strain worse than it was last winter, not to mention the increased destruction which will make the cities harder to live in, and to enable them to stand that strain, they are going to need two things: Enough to eat—enough in quality as well as in quantity—and a plausible hope of victory. Both of those things, as well as the increased supply of war materials which the British will also need, depend on success in the battle of the Atlantic, which is not going quite so favorably as Senator Vandenberg would have us believe. The British Admiralty's figures on shipping losses are believed to be correct by the outside observers, who are in the best position to know, and they showed almost a million tons sunk in the last two months, not counting ships damaged which may be out of service for some time during repair.

The most important convoys are naturally the best protected. They usually get through with little or no loss, but the British simply have not enough warships to protect them all, and a ship sunk anywhere in the world is that much tonnage that can never be used anyhere again. Mr. Churchill, reporting to the House of Commons on May 7th said: "With the continued flow of assistance already given to us by the United States and promised to us, we can probably maintain our minimum essential traffic during 1941. As for 1942, we must look for an immense construction of merchant ships by the United States." That is as official as any statement can be and it certainly offers no ground for exaggerated optimism. It seems probable that this year an increased proportion of this decreased total of shipping may be allotted to food. As I reported a couple of weeks ago, after a talk with Lord Woolton, the Food Minister, the British have for the moment enough of the basic volume foods—bread, potatoes, and some vegetables—but they need vitamins, they need condensed milk for the children, they need meat and cheese and sugar to keep up their spirits and their capacity to work. Probably they are better off than the Germans on the whole, but every now and then the Germans conquer another little nation and live better for a few weeks on its looted food supplies. They've about run out of small nations now, but the Germans have been on short rations for years and they're more used to them than the English. If the American people regard it as essential to our national interest to see Hitler licked, we'd better see to it that meat and sugar and vitamins in sufficient quantity get to the English, who are all of them up there in the front line. They need bombers which can be flown over, but they need other things, tanks, and guns and food, which must be shipped, and we may find that if we want Hitler to lose this war, we shall have to help see that the stuff gets there. That means convoys, which may mean shooting, but if Hitler should win this war, there's likely to be some shooting afterwards which would no longer be on the other side of the Atlantic.

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Architect-Writer

ON ARCHITECTURE. By Frank Lloyd Wright. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1941. 275 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by CARL FEISS

THIS is the first of a set of three books on or by Frank Lloyd Wright, the other two to appear within the next year. The second book is Mr. Wright's autobiography, published in 1932, revised and brought up to date; the third is to be a compendium of photographs of his buildings.

Frank Lloyd Wright is unquestionably America's greatest contemporary architect. His work has been stimulating and exciting, even to his many severe critics, and his influence has been world-wide. But Mr. Wright is not our greatest contemporary writer.

This book is a collection of selected writings and speeches, from 1894 to 1940, which were published in various magazines from the *Ladies Home Journal* to *Physical Culture,* as well as in the architectural periodicals. It is a combination of didactic epigrams, aphorisms, and curiously wise and witty statements, in a literary style somewhere between Epictetus and Gertrude Stein. The statements are for the most part highly emotional, highly romantic, and loosely organized. This does not make for easy reading, nor for a clear understanding of Mr. Wright's philosophy.

This does not mean that he does not have a philosophy. Through the whole book there run the threads of a striving to describe beauty in terms of building materials, in terms of form, in terms of nature. It is the philosophy of a man who has complete faith in himself and little interest in people, in society, in shall we say, humanism. He sees his buildings and he sees beauty on a high plane, set apart from the world of reality, because the world of reality is full of disorder, of ugliness, and of impotence. Mr. Wright has no patience with human frailty.

The book loses by its lack of illustrations. It is hard to visualize its serious perusal by anyone not familiar with Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. It could mean little to the layman, and will mean little to many architects and artists. In all likelihood its true value will appear as it relates to the two future volumes. It is unfortunate that this is the first one of the three to be published.

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
Morningside Heights, New York

California Bound

GOLD RUSH BY SEA. By Garrett W. Low. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1941. 187 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by IRVIN ANTHONY

MANY swaggering accounts of the hard road to California round the Horn have been written, and for most part they are filled with the fire of the swashbuckling gold digger, but in Garrett W. Low's journal we have a very different chronicle.

Aloof as a god, Low looked upon what he saw; and forgot to be a hero. Perhaps because he was one of ten first class passengers in the *Washington Irving* of packet ship fame, all of them excellent copy for a novelist, perhaps because he had both a sense of humor and a bent toward poetry, his diary has an air of wonder untouched by the fierce dignity of most adventurers. He even enjoys himself, and the reader shares his delight.

Once in California he was able to keep the same detachment he had preserved through the voyage. Out of no end of hardships he sees clearly and records candidly the hurly burly of his pioneering. In a terse phrase he often turns out in a single comment matter to which most authors would have given a chapter. No oddity in the strange life escapes him. Caught in the hectic events of the rush, he keeps his head clear, and records in plain English what he thought of them. Murders, the climate, bull and bear fighting, rattlesnakes, lumbering, eeling—he lets nothing escape without notice. It is in these casual reflections that the book excells.

The end papers by Edward Shenton are particularly worthy of notice.

Russian Doctor

FROM ORIENT TO OCCIDENT. By Leon Weber-Bauler. New York: Oxford University Press. 1941. 287 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by LINTON WELLS

DR. LEON WEBER-BAULER was born an aristocrat in the Russia of the 70s, son of a Russian intellectual mother who entered "upon a war to the death against the autocratic regime in Russia and, at the same time, against the capitalist system in Europe." She had "neither the courage nor the cold exaltation of the terrorist martyrs," and therefore abandoned an early tendency toward nihilism, turned to socialism, and set about to "convince the masses of their wonderful destiny." Threatened with arrest and banishment to Siberia, she abandoned her husband, moved from place to place for the rest of her life, gradually losing her illusions about humanity. She died at the age of 90, still smoking thirty cigarettes a day and a bitter abhorrent of Bolshevism.

"From Orient to Occident" is a collection of Dr. Weber-Bauer's pen-pictures of the life and times of his ancestors and of his own reminiscences as a son of a socialist conspirator. Despite poverty and persecution, the author managed to obtain a medical education in France and established himself in Switzerland as a practising physician. After World War I, in which he served as medical officer with the French and later with the Russians, Dr. Weber-Bauler returned to Switzerland to become the Medical Referee of the Secretariat of the League of Nations and the Labor Office.

The effects of Dr. Weber-Bauler's close association with radicalism are illustrated, I think, by these surprising declarations, to which even many non-radicals will take exception:

"You must not believe that Russia, in the years preceding the Great War, backward as it was in many ways, was exclusively a country of poverty-stricken people working for the benefit of ultra-wealthy *boyards;* it was, to be sure, a capitalist country, and as in other countries, its wealth was inequitably divided, but it was not exclusively in the hands of the 'big' people. . . . Do not go by the funereal decriptions of Gorki; do not imagine that the Russia of the people was a country of bare-foot beggars. Russia, like the West, had its underworld, but its inhabitants were the dregs, not the general run of the people, and even these dregs, since food was cheap and plentiful, were perhaps better off than the poor of London and Paris." That was not the Russia I saw in 1914.

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Daughter of a Genius

COLERIDGE FILLE: A Biography of Sara Coleridge. By Earl Leslie Griggs. New York: Oxford University Press. 1941. 259 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

Sara Coleridge, daughter of the poet, differed from her father in lacking genius and in possessing a sharp sense of responsibility. In other respects she was remarkably like him: widely read, deeply religious, delicate in nervous organization, by nature strongly affectionate, conservative in politics, fluent as a writer but deficient (as she said) in "executive and *arrangeative* power." Less brilliant but more industrious than her brother Hartley, she produced a number of miscellaneous works, including a volume of fairy tales that was reprinted as late as 1927. She served literature best, however, by her conscientious and intelligent editing of her father's works. Both her literary and domestic careers are the more interesting because of the fact that her life-span (1802-1852) fell during the years when England was experiencing those profound changes—literary, political, and social—which were to end in full-blown Victorianism.

How Sara Coleridge managed to be not only a devoted daughter, wife, and mother, but a woman of letters as well is told in Earl Leslie Griggs's "Coleridge Fille." Working from a wealth of almost untouched correspondence as well as from established bases of information, Mr. Griggs details Sara's life down to about 1843, the year of her husband's death. Thereafter he gives over the chronological method and groups his data under the headings of her editorship, her career as a bluestocking, and her personal life. The presentation of Sara in full portrait has of course thrown new light on her father, as well as on many other members of the Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth families. Mr. Griggs's presentation is not extremely artful, but it is satisfying clear, concise, and direct. Best of all, it is natural: the author makes no compromise with the current demand for "romantic" biographies. An authority in the field, he relies upon the solid merit of his work and upon the inherently interesting story of Sara Coleridge.

The Other Bank

WEST OF THE RIVER. By Dorothy Gardiner. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1941. 347 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

FAR too much history has been made west of the Missouri River in the United States even to be thoroughly indexed in a book of this size. Emerson Hough wrote an excellent small volume on the exciting days of the old West, but that was impressionistic and interpretative, a splendid foreword for all the detailed accounts of the cowboys, the Indians, the trappers, explorers, miners, coach roads and railways, Mormons, emigrants, and the whole catalogue of vivid materials which have furnished texts for hundred of volumes.

"West of the River" is episodic and anecdotal and the effect it gives is that of a carelessly compiled and badly balanced album of small snapshots. It contains almost no original research materials, no convincing inductions or conclusions from the quoted materials or abstracted passages which make up a substantial part of the book. There is no particular reason for the volume except some good illustrations and a very handsome binding.

Miss Gardiner leans most heavily on details of transportation; coaches, boats, freighters, the Overland and the Pony Express, and the railways, but this has already been far more thoroughly done in a number of books, notably Seymour Dunbar's four-volume "History of Travel in America," with its almost appalling bibliography and table of source materials.

Twenty-nine pages are devoted to the fur traders, to whom the late Constance Lindsay Skinner gave a solid volume, "Beaver, Kings and Cabins," sparklingly written and authenticated by source materials and personal investigations. Similarly, one page and a little over are given to the horse in the West and most of this is either dubious, misleading, or simply incorrect. A horse that walks "at the pace of a man" and considers twenty miles a solid day's stint should be canned for corned beef. No one but Miss Gardiner is positive about the origin of the Plains horse, but by far the most plausible theory up to date is that of Francis Haynes in *American Anthropologist,* Jan. - Mar., 1938, suggesting that the first horses were stolen from de Oñates, a settler near Santa Fé in 1598. One can say with a fair degree of certainty that they were not, as Miss Gardiner has it, runaways from the Spanish ranches far to the south. The chapter dealing with the Pony Express seems to be little more than a gloss on Arthur Chapman's book of that title.

In short, this is an excellent example of how not to write history — merely selecting juicy squibs from standard texts and tossing them together with no attention to proportion and little more to ordering.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Shakespeare: "Sonnet XXIX."
2. Gray: "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."
3. Keats: "To Autumn."
4. Goldsmith: "The Deserted Village."
5. Wordsworth: "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality."
6. Arnold: "The Buried Life."
7. Johnson: "Lines Added to Goldsmith's Traveller."
8. Pope: "The Rape of the Lock."
9. Milton: "Lycidas."
10. Milton: "Paradise Lost."
11. Wordsworth: "Westminster Bridge."
12. Arnold: "Thyrisis."
13. Tennyson: "Ulysses."
14. Keats: "The Eve of St. Agnes."

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Gruesome Hall

THE CRIME OF LAURA SARELLE. By Joseph Shearing. New York: Smith & Durrell. 1941. 309 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

I WOULD take Sally Benson's word for it that the sinister novels of Joseph Shearing are generally "tops." Anyone who writes as well as does Mrs. Benson should know. I think, however, that "The Crime of Laura Sarelle" must be one of Mr. Shearing's less remarkable efforts.

It is full of atmosphere. Leppard Hall, the old Warwickshire place, however, impresses me more by its dullness through the first half of the book than by the charnel quality that is constantly alluded to but never quite made impressive.

> The room was as "old-fashioned" —that was the term Mr. Mostyn used in his mind [*And why not?—Reviewer*]—as the rest of the house. Heavy pieces of furniture, inlaid and finely finished, dark pictures of the last century (no portraits here, but fruit pieces and landscapes again such as he had in his own room), a rich marble chimney piece, great blue vases of Rockingham china, painted with bunches of roses and carnations, chairs covered with that dark-yellow satin.

The book, at first, is a good deal like that room. You feel you are dealing with a minor Wilkie Collins or Sheridan Le Fanu. Laura Sarelle is beautiful and young, has a horrible dull snob for a brother, called of all things, Theodosius; falls in love early on with his steward named Lucius—a high-spirited Irish scion—is betrothed to the dullish Harry Mostyn, after Lucius leaves the scene; and doesn't do anything in particular for the first half of the book except complain, and once fall into the river. Lucius makes faint efforts to find out what the true story is back of a fine old portrait of an earlier Laura Sarelle dressed in primrose silk, an ancestress whose ancient costume the young living one borrowed to do her nose-dive in. There is some scandal of which the old family portrait is a symbol, but no one will tell him just what it is.

Then the living Laura acquires a distillery, which isn't what you think it is, but a closet next to her room where she can distil perfumes from flowers. Why was the closet originally fitted up like that and to what uses was it put? Down at the *Bear and Ragged Staff* in the village there's a handsome whip in a glass case over the mantelpiece that belonged to a certain Captain Avershaw who was hanged back in the eighteenth century. Lucius Delaunay had run into him in his researches, and Harry Mostyn now learns about him. What he discovers worries him, but then Laura's fortune is a hundred thousand pounds! (Incidentally I like a vicar being named Mist and a body-servant named Flasket!) From these hints you get the general building toward what happens later. After about page 180 a great deal happens. The old crime of Leppard Hall is revealed. The living Laura Sarelle gets her bright idea. This is the best part of the book. Though one easily foresees what is going to happen, the description of the tragedy is really moving; and at last the ghastly influence of the dead is really felt by the reader.

It is obvious that Mr. Shearing is an author with a keen sense of the dramatic, not to say the melodramatic, and one of those crime writers you should keep within reach on your reserve shelf. Some day this reviewer hopes to read his best books.

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THE CRIME OF *Laura Sarelle*

BY JOSEPH SHEARING

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The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
JASON BURR'S FIRST CASE *David Kent* (Random House: $2.)	Stabbing of museum chief with artifact and two subsequent slayings cleared up by gruff ex-reporter sleuth.	Archaeological patter novel and interesting. Brusque operative Burr after badly handicapped start does good deducing job.	Grade A
MURDER WELL DONE *Ione Sandburg Shriver* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Penniless bride of heir to millions runs into hatred and triple murder at Mich. family estate. Lieut. Grady investigates.	Tangled and tragic events of unhappy honeymoon vividly portrayed. Action swift, and sleuthing admirable, with copious clues around for observant puzzlers.	A No. 1
THE SHARKSKIN BOOK *Harry Stephen Keeler* (Dutton: $2.)	Pathologist, under police persuasion, confesses to murder he didn't commit. Subsequent discoveries check with "confession." He has terrible time.	Highly flavored Keeler mixture of decayed corpses, tough hombres, Chinese aphorisms, deplorable dialogue, and what have you.	Passing strange
THE PURPLE ONION MYSTERY *H. Ashbrook* (Coward-McCann: $2.)	Shooting of N. Y. Publisher's secretary hands Spike Tracy trickiest job in his ebullient career.	Copious action and much amusing dialogue. Spike, tho' still unpredictable, shows real talent for painstaking deduction.	Pleasant
THE BLACK CURTAIN *Cornell Woolrich* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	Hapless amnesiac discovers he is wanted for unremembered double murder. He trails himself beautifully.	Brilliant variation on reasonably familiar theme. No lack of thrills, emotion and suspense.	Spine-tingler

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THE NEW BOOKS

(*Continued from page* 16)

physician will be the prevention of disease, health centers will be available to all, no doctor will be economically dependent on his patients.

"Medicine and Human Welfare" is a highly interesting and suggestive contribution to the "social medicine" controversy. It deserves thoughtful consideration from physicians and laymen alike. Twenty attractive old prints illustrate the text and although they add nothing to the argument they emphasize its historical basis.

M. S. U.

Travel

HERE'S TO CANADA! By Dorothy Duncan. Harpers. 1941. 334 *pp. and index.* $3.

The Dominion of Canada is probably more tourist-minded at the moment than at any other time in its history. Official invitations, posters, leaflets, and advertisements in many American periodicals featuring Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his dog —all these are part of Canada's defense program. The flow of travellers northward provides an invaluable source of American dollars with which Canada can purchase airplanes, machine tools, raw materials, and other necessities of war. This comprehensive travel book ought to offer a special stimulus to Americans planning their summer vacation and looking for a chance to get $1.10 change for every American $1.00 bill. So far as this reviewer knows, it is the most complete and up-to-date guidebook to Canada now available.

Miss Duncan, an American-born woman married to a Canadian, knows her Canada at first hand, for she gives many interesting and often amusing accounts of her travels across the continent. Each of the nine Provinces, as well as the Arctic territories, receives a separate chapter of discussion and description. There are detailed lists of highway, railroad, ship, and airplane routes; specialty shops; and books, pamphlets, and travel offices from which further information can be obtained. The text, which contains an unusual amount of historical material and general comments on Canadian life, is supplemented by thirty-two pages of splendid photographs. Only two major defects are immediately apparent; the distinctly inadequate maps, and the absence of any list of hotels and inns.

J. F. G.

NEVADA: A Guide to the Silver State. *Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration. Portland, Ore.: Binfords & Mort.* 1940. 315 *pp., with index.* $2.50.

Since the days of '49 the Humbolt River country has usually been thought of as a place you had to cross in order to get to California. Because of this unfortunate state of mind, anyone driving to California even today will probably spend what he considers a necessarily dull day or two in Nevada. Having a copy of this guide-book handy might serve to make these days fascinating. Although not so spectacular in scenery or in history as its neighbors east and west, Nevada nevertheless offers plenty of interest in both respects—interest which the motorist, speeding through along U. S. 40, is too likely to miss. This guide-book (combining lengthy introduction, detailed tour-directions, and photographs) continues the work of the other state guide-books, and maintains the high standard of the series. G. R. S.

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Double-Crostics: No. 377

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-R	2-M	■	3-I	4-E	5-A	6-Y	7-S	■	8-J	9-D	10-I	11-P	12-X	13-Z	14-Q
15-W	16-L	17-S	18-U	19-G	■	20-S	21-T	22-J	23-X	24-P	25-U	■	26-O	27-U	28-Q
■	29-W	30-J	31-Y	32-C	33-P	34-K	■	35-W	36-K	37-A	38-O	■	39-N	40-V	■
41-P	42-D	43-J	44-X	45-W	46-N	47-G	48-S	49-I	50-Z	■	51-I	52-T	53-E	54-O	■
55-E	56-R	■	57-I	58-R	59-U	60-O	61-M	62-D	63-P	64-G	65-B	■	66-F	67-Q	■
68-U	69-Q	70-Y	■	71-W	72-I	73-H	74-B	75-X	■	76-D	77-U	78-H	79-O	80-M	81-C
■	82-K	83-A	84-M	■	85-U	86-I	87-Y	88-T	89-Z	90-W	91-X	■	92-B	93-E	■
94-G	95-A	96-D	■	97-S	98-F	99-M	100-I	101-R	102-A	■	103-R	104-E	105-C	■	106-F
107-K	108-G	■	109-Z	110-A	111-S	112-P	113-T	114-D	115-B	■	116-A	117-G	118-X	119-C	120-L
■	121-R	122-F	■	123-P	124-N	125-I	126-T	127-X	128-J	■	129-E	130-V	■	131-O	■
132-P	133-F	134-B	135-T	136-J	137-Z	138-A	■	139-M	140-G	141-V	142-L	■	143-X	144-J	145-U
146-D	■	147-Q	148-K	■	149-Y	150-A	151-M	152-J	153-E	■	154-H	155-I	156-J	157-Z	158-V
159-Q	160-T	161-X	■	162-M	163-G	■	164-L	165-B	166-C	167-G	168-T	■	169-M	170-K	■
171-V	■	172-I	173-H	174-W	175-Z	176-S	177-A	178-N	179-L	180-T	181-P	■	■	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 6 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Famous old English hunting ballad (2 wds.)
B. Mythical island of Calypso (Odyssey).
C. Mythical king of Britain from whom London was named.
D. Character in *Vanity Fair* killed at Waterloo (last name).
E. Ship used by the forces of Hel at Ragnarök (Norse).
F. Foster-father of King Arthur (Morte d'Arthur).
G. Legal author of *Tenures* (1422-81).
H. Accumulate.
I. Elaborated or worked to excess.
J. Not regarding or noting.
K. Assail with withering denunciation.
L. First word of "mystery" novel title by Dickens.
M. Unretentive.
N. Blighted; clipped with shears (poetic sp.)
O. Small swamp rabbit.
P. Motive, spur.
Q. Monolith alone or in a circle
R. He traveled on an arrow given him by Apollo.
S. Tangible.
T. Author of "Moral Tales" (1801).
U. Imitation of work by others (art, lit.)
V. Steeped in water or other liquid.
W. Querulous in mood.
X. Covered or lined with a hard coat.
Y. Medieval 2-stringed instrument played by plucking.
Z. Reached across in space or time.

WORDS

110	83	150	37	138	116	95	177	102	5
165	65	115	74	92	134				
119	32	166	105	81					
9	146	76	42	114	62	96			
104	53	153	55	93	129	4			
122	98	106	66	133					
167	140	94	163	19	108	47	117	64	
78	173	73	154						
49	10	125	172	51	155	100	86	3	57	72
30	43	144	156	136	128	22	152	8	
148	34	36	82	107	170				
142	120	164	179	16					
162	2	99	84	80	151	169	139	61	
39	124	46	178						
26	131	60	38	54	79				
33	181	41	11	112	132	63	123	24	
14	28	67	69	147	159				
103	121	58	101	1	56				
7	97	20	17	48	111				
113	168	135	160	126	180	21	88	52	
59	18	25	68	145	85	27	77		
171	130	40	158	141					
29	15	45	174	90	71	35			
75	91	44	12	118	23	143	127	161	
87	70	149	6	31					
109	157	89	13	50	175	137			

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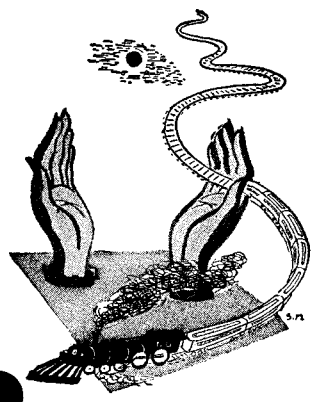

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TRADE WINDS

MEET Red. Red is a nice guy and his complete handle is Morris "Red" Rudensky. Red belongs in this column for he is an editor and writer. He gives occasion for a lot of thought and pleasure to his readers and his is one of the very few publications we know that has 100 per cent circulation in the area in which the magazine is published. Red is editor of *The Atlantian,* edited and printed at the United States Penitentiary, Atlanta, Georgia. He wrote to us the other day and wanted to know what we thought of the magazine. Well, we think it good. The entire product is professional in make-up and contents and the editing is discriminating. Yet, it's sad to reflect that many of the boys down in Atlanta get their first chance to become articulate behind prison bars.

★ ★

☞A notable achievement in American publishing was recently proclaimed when Random House celebrated the publication of the ten-millionth copy of a Modern Library book. There are few titles, indeed, in this admirable collection which are of minor importance. That the American public will absorb good literature is made evident by its record, in the enormous sales of such titles as "The Iliad," "Tom Jones," "Moby Dick," and "Cities of the Plain." To sell ten million copies of any series of books is a fantastic achievement (we are not forgetting the *Little Blue Books* at five cents), yet Random House has done it and with the sort of titles one is proud to read and have on the library shelf.

★ ★

☞Smith & Durrell are following up their "Record Book," which presents a critical survey of classical records, with "The Jazz Record Book"—a reference guide to the record-literature of jazz. Messrs. Smith, Ramsey, Jr., and Russell are doing the book which will include more than 1,000 famous jazz records. They will be listed and analyzed as to soloist, band, period, and style—from jazz's earliest beginnings in New Orleans's Perdido Street and Storyville right through to the Goodman, Miller, and Crosby bands. The book is due in early fall.

★ ★

☞Add notes on jazz music. Macmillan is publishing this month W. C. Handy's "Father of the Blues." The "St. Louis Blues" composer is the dean of all "blues" writers and what he has to say should prove of much interest to serious students of this branch of musical composition. Mr. Handy states that "Southern Negroes accompany themselves on anything from which they can extract a musical sound or rhythmical effect."

★ ★

☞Back in 1918, just before they sailed for France, a then unknown author and artist collaborated in a book called "Dere Mable." When they next heard of it, more than a hundred thousand copies had been sold. Before they reached home again "Dere Mable" and its sequel "That's Me All Over, Mable" had sold three-quarters of a million copies. Dodd, Mead, believing there is little difference between the soldier boy of today and the doughboy of the first World War, are going to issue a new edition of these books in a single volume. It would be interesting to see and hear what the boys think about them today.

★ ★

☞Out in Chicago, where his Argus Bookshop has won an enviable reputation, Ben Abramson, alert for the unusual, has affixed the following sign to one of the windows of his store: "Buy British Books Bound Between Blitzes." Inside is an interesting exhibition of fine bindings now being executed in Britain under hazardous conditions. To Ben, Britain delivers the goods.

★ ★

☞Another recent Batsford-Scribner volume is "Cambridge" (companion to last year's "Oxford"). John Steegman deals admirably with the historical and architectural aspects of the University. The photographs and reproductions of old prints are good enough to be uncomfortably nostalgic for an old Cantabrigian. The author's forthright and witty handling of modern buildings, both town and gown, is welcome, but once in a while his good taste becomes Good Form dyed Old School Tie. For such "social" phases of Cambridge existence as elementary school students (*our* public school), and the women's colleges, Mr. Steegman adopts a tone embarrassing and pointless in 1941. We kept wishing the late Virginia Woolf could answer his remarks upon Girton and Newnham, until we realized that, of course, she has already done so in "A Room of One's Own" (remember the Girton dessert of prunes and custard?) and in "Three Guineas." In spite of all this, the Cambridge is definitely a book to have around, and an excellent complement to Mr. Clark's discussions of the arts of the island when the population of England numbered two thousand.

LOUIS GREENFELD.

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